

(Mr. CONAWAY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMEMBERING RECENT NATURAL DISASTERS IN IOWA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to remember that, in a time of widespread national disasters, it is important to remember those disasters that have already occurred this year and not forget the impact that they have had on people back in the great State of Iowa, which I am proud to represent in this body.

For most of us, May 25th was the day before Memorial Day. It was the day of my son's high school open house from his graduation, and our biggest concern that day was how much rain we were going to get. But shortly after all of our guests left, I started following a news story that would have profound implications for me and the people I represent back in Iowa's First District.

This wall cloud that is visible on the easel to my right was a wall cloud that brought a devastating EF-5 tornado to the citizens of Parkersburg, New Hartford, Dunkerton and Hazleton, killing eight people, causing widespread destruction in those communities and serious flooding in other parts of my district. And that was what transformed the summer of 2008 for many Iowans.

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This wall cloud contained this powerful tornado and went right by one of my constituents' farms, that was Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY, who lives near New Hartford, Iowa. The effects of this powerful tornado can be seen in this photograph, this overhead shot of Parkersburg, Iowa, where nearly one-third of homes and businesses in the south side of Parkersburg were destroyed.

You can see here where the high school was destroyed. The folks in Parkersburg are very proud of the fact that four of the graduates of their high school, Aplington-Parkersburg, currently are starters in the National Football League, an extraordinary accomplishment for a town of less than 2,000 people. The widespread devastation as this EF-5 tornado went through Parkersburg will be felt for many years to come and illustrate the need for Federal emergency disaster assistance in times when people are at their most vulnerable.

To give you a better view of how individuals were impacted, this photograph shows the widespread destruction that leveled, literally, every home, office, business and building in the swath of the tornado pass through. You can see that the trees are completely denuded of any vegetation. Here you see people that are working hard to clean up an area where one of the homes was destroyed near where two people were killed.

I was very proud that when this disaster struck, my staff did a fantastic job of responding to the needs of every community wherever we could. This photograph shows me with my chain saw in front of one of the homes that was completely destroyed shortly after the tornado struck.

This is the basement of the home that I was working on and a family whose entire home contents were completely destroyed by the tornado. I kept holding up things that I found in their basement and asking them if they wanted to save it, and they said, well, that's not ours. This is common.

There were things that were found, that were taken out of Parkersburg during this tornado, in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, over 100 miles away.

On the front edge of the tornado, the town of Lamont had 8 inches of rain in a 24-hour period that flooded the community and caused widespread destruction to their infrastructure, including this bridge, all within the week of Memorial Day.

Then, as if that weren't enough, the week after Memorial Day, the town of New Hartford, which had been hit by this EF-5 tornado, was completely overwhelmed by flooding from Beaver Creek. The tragedy of these storms is that, as you can see in the background of downtown New Hartford, the hardware store has left town. The only convenience store, the Kwik Star, has left town and is no longer in business. The places where people went to get their basic necessities are being driven out by the implications of these storms.

The town of Elkader, Iowa, up in Clayton County, which is one of the most scenic parts of my district, had a flood predicted at 20 feet for a 12-foot flood stage. The river crested at 31 feet and overwhelmed the community, destroyed the grocery store, flooded businesses and caused widespread destruction to homes in Elkader.

Waverly, Iowa, in Bremer County, also suffered widespread damage due to the flooding. The same types of destruction can be seen in their downtown streets, which has enormous implications for infrastructure. Cedar Falls' utilities, completely overwhelmed by the flooding, and a railroad bridge in downtown Waterloo, where I live, will need to be replaced and has an enormous impact on the commerce at John Deere's Waterloo works.

The disaster response that this Congress made was immediate and swift, \$2.65 billion, but much more is needed to address the needs in the First District and the Second District and other parts of Iowa. It's time for Congress to act and pass a supplemental disaster assistance bill for all of the midwestern flooding and tornado victims and also addresses serious problems from Hurricane Ike and Gustav in our gulf coast.

The response initially to this disaster from our Federal disaster agencies was very encouraging, but there has been a backlog in getting the funds that Con-

gress has appropriated through the Federal agencies to the people in need in Iowa. The time to break that backlog is now.

We need to start freeing up the Community Development Block Grant money so that it can have an impact in these communities that I have been showing you here tonight. We need to free up other small business loans and other funding that should be getting to the people in need in Iowa, including the people of Cedar Rapids, who were devastated with the highest flood that they have ever seen and has 400 square blocks of downtown Cedar Rapids where homes and businesses were destroyed and need to be rebuilt.

That's why the crisis is now. The time to act is now. We need to take advantage of the widespread attention on people in need in this country and address their concerns.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight as part of the 30-Something Working Group. We will be joined tonight by several members of the working group, including Congressman TIM RYAN from Ohio. I believe Congressman MEEK from Florida is going to be making an appearance, and anyone else who wants to join in that may be viewing us, certainly from their offices, is welcome to come down and join the discussion on a couple of issues that are facing this country and some things that are in the news this week and that we have dealt with in Congress this week.

Number one, I am going to start with the economy. I don't think anyone can pick up a newspaper, watch a TV or do any reading of any kind without seeing that our economy is in crisis right now. The stock market on this day went down 450 points after going down more than 500 points the day before yesterday.

We are in the position right now, as a Congress, and as a Nation, where we have some very difficult decisions to make. The administration came in and did their third major bailout of a major corporate institution this week with the AIG Insurance Company, and we are going to talk more about that. We are going to talk about the reasons why we got to where we are today.

There is an instructive part of this whole thing to take a walk down memory lane and to see what the economy was like 8 years ago and what the economy is like today, and to discuss how we got from where we are, where we were then, to where we are today.

We also have to talk about what's happening today, what is the crisis, what, exactly, is next. In some ways we don't know, but there are things that